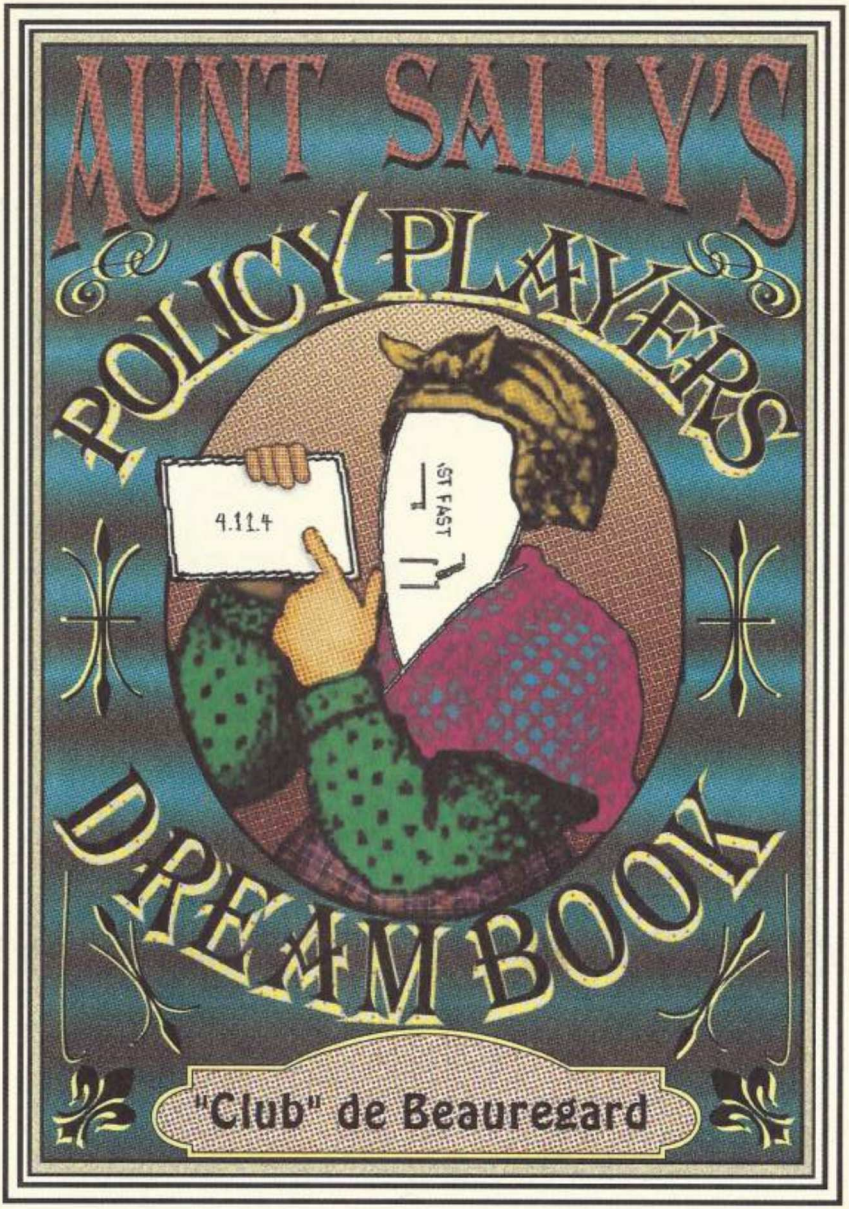
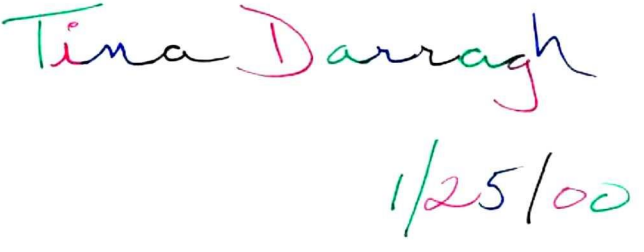


TINA DARRAGH

★ DREAM RIM INSTRUCTIONS ★

dream rim instructions

Tina Darragh



Drogue Press New York 1999

Some of these dream rims have appeared previously in *Primary Writing, Chain, Philly Talks, Etruscan Jetty: Anthology of the 5th Six Towns Poetry Festival, 1996*, and *Etruscan Reader VIII (with Douglas Oliver and Randolph Healy* (Buckfastleigh, S. Devonshire: Etruscan Books, 1998)

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This project is dedicated to
Dodie Bellamy and Michael Lally

"By the late twentieth century, our time, we are all theorized and fabricated [elements from different languages] of [MECH.] and [*Chem.*]; in short, we are [cydreams]. [Cydreams] (are) condensed image(s) of both imagination and material reality. No longer structured by the polarity of [conscious/unconscious], the [cydream] defines a [craft + local nickname]. I want to see if [cydreams] can subvert the apocalypse of returning to nuclear dust in the manic compulsion to name. [Cydream] politics is the struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication, against the one code that translates all meaning perfectly. This is a dream not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia."

with [substitutions] from Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto"

Georgetown Park Reading Dream

We showed up for the reading. Instead of taking place at Bridge Street Books, it was being held in the Georgetown Park mall. We wondered about where people would sit, and where I would read. There were some benches beside a waterfall, but since it was noisy there we decided to go to a triangular-shaped section where people could sit or lean back against the walls. Everyone was getting settled when I looked up to see Alan in the wicker store across the way. He was sitting in a rattan chair like the one in a photo of Huey Newton, except that it was a rocking chair and when Alan leaned back he was catapulted out in an arc and made a painful grimace as he fell. I told Phyllis that he had fallen and she said "OK, I'll go get him," so we had to hold up the reading until she came back. People were getting restless, so I stood up on the wall behind a guy I didn't know who had begun talking about his own work in a monotone voice that droned on and on. I thought "I should stop him because it's my reading," but I couldn't speak because I was staring at a long bug crawling through his thinning hair over by his right ear, and I was trying to figure out whether it was a worm or not, and finally I saw tiny legs so I know it wasn't a worm. Then other people began talking about their works, and Mimi said "Isn't this great - my sister is so generous letting others talk about their stuff," so I felt relieved that things were going well, but when I started to read there was too much noise and no one could hear. A loud MTV video was blasting from a screen on the opposite wall and when I went to turn it down the person who was watching said "YOU can't do that - don't you know that people LIVE here!" which I remembered was true and when I went back the crowd had broken up and if I'd try to start reading again someone would

say "You can't do that - everyone isn't back yet." So I sat there with lots of books in my hands at a low table covered with a white tablecloth on a narrow bench with an orange tinge, and I thought "This is really Italian-looking" when Lynne walked up to me and said "We've been waiting for you to read for 25 minutes, don't you think you should start NOW." I was really worried and hastily took the first book off the top of the pile and opened it but it wasn't my book. I had to read it anyway since everyone had been waiting for so long. The first part was a series of bathroom light fixtures, like a newspaper insert for a hardware store. I made the sound of screwing lightbulbs in and out, and I moved my head to go with the sound. I was worried that the people in the audience who didn't know my work wouldn't understand, but Joan nodded approvingly and that helped. Across from the light fixtures was a diagram poem in the shape of a "V" that also was a watch fob with a chain that moved back and forth by clasping the "R" at the end of it. When I moved the "R" over there were a lot of "A"s and then "PE" and I thought "I'm not going to read the "A"s as "ahahahahahahahah" so I made a decision to spell it out after "R." I read "R A-A-A-A-A-A-A-A PE" and then I noticed people in the audience rolling their eyes and mouthing to each other "Oh, she's writing about RAPE." Then I turned the page and it was a glossy picture of things I'd never seen before from an archeological dig, neatly arranged as an advertisement. I panicked but then I thought "Well, the audience can't see the picture so how are they going to know if I call these things by the wrong names?" I pointed to each item in turn and said "SHOVEL URN TREE POT BRICK BOAT." Then there was thunderous applause, just thunderous, even though there was hardly anyone there, and I thought "This is a trick of the acoustics in Georgetown Park." Doug came up to me and said "Even though you only

read one poem, it was terrific," and handed me a box of little soaps from Caswell Massey. I thought "Caswell Massey? Doug goes to the Body Shop." P. opened the box and there was a photo in an envelope in between the layers of soap. Doug turned to me and said "It's a picture of you pregnant," and I thought "Oh, no, it's not THAT picture, is it? I couldn't have left THAT picture just lying around!" Then we were walking out single file beside a long row of empty dishes on steam tables. Someone in front of the line, dressed in a green and white striped shirt with a white towel wrapped around his waist, turned and said "Tina, continue to do what you do for at least a quarter of the day," at which point he became flustered and said "I mean, about 25 minutes." P. put his hand on my elbow and said "Walk faster - we've got to get out of here."

First Sighting of Martine "Club" de Beauregard

The dream consisted solely of a wrinkled old woman in a black hat and dress pointing to the words "Martine 'Club' de Beauregard" printed on the rim of something, I don't know what.

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Martine is a bit confused

with all these abbreviations for the SELF from ancient languages that the Author breaks up with "chance operations" as if THERE'S NO ORIGIN THERE 'cause she did it OBJECTIVELY and the twistie/linguistie psychowobble she's unleashed on the world is floating free & not hooked up to an authenticiTREE 'cause she's got the LOOK (nod nod) hanging in her BOOK (nod nod) and she thinks she COOKS (nod nod) but she's really a SCHNOOK (wad wad).

Beth & Tom's Dream House

for Beth Joselow and Tom Mandel

I went to visit Tom and Beth in their new home. The living room had two aquariums. Tom's sat directly on the floor in a space of its own surrounded by a low fence made of upside-down U grillwork. Nearby there was a tall lamp on a timer designed to give only the right amount of light for the fish. Beth's aquarium was horseshoe-shaped in the center of the room facing the door. It was really an aquarium/desk - the fish were in a brightly lit "window" all around the outside of the horseshoe while the writing area was on the inside. The desk itself had a lot of compartments trimmed in red, and overhead was a red mobile of exotic animals, mostly monkeys. Then I noticed that all the wood trim in the house had been painted red to match the desk. I thought "I must be in New Orleans."

Ben Friedlander in NYC Dream

I went to visit Ben in NYC. He lived at the bottom of a hill & when we came outside I commented on how beautiful it was & he said "You think this is beautiful?" & I said something about how I liked all the various shades of brown. Then we walked up the hill which proved to be quite steep and was made of ribbed tires at the top. There were some poets at the top of the hill, including a girl Ben knew. The two of them communicated in gestures and sounds, and Ben gave her some tiny drawings as if it had been prearranged. Then the poets turned into gang members and I wasn't paying attention and said "yes" to killing somebody when in fact I hadn't & then everyone started grilling me, and when we got out of there Ben apologized to me but I said that it wasn't his fault and then he told us (P. was there at this point) to go to a reading at St. Mark's Church on Sunday night- it was going to be Philip Guston (the name was really clear - written in pencil on a white piece of paper) & there was some hint that whoever it was had been trading on Guston's name but Ben said that all the poets liked his work anyway, and P. said "Well, that doesn't mean I'M going to like it."

Shrine Gift Shop Dream

for Michael Lally

There was an ad for new rosary beads at the Shrine gift shop - $45.00 for a set that appeared in the picture to be coral roses that, when fingered, became some sort of shell resembling road cones. The bead cones followed an ad mentioning items for children - salt and pepper shakers with little plastic ears for children to hold. Mass was about to begin. The altar boys lined up for their procession, but then shed their cassocks and started running around. Long Arms wanted to go up by the front door. I had a bunch of poetry books with me, so many that it was difficult to hold them. She told me to have just one, and to put the rest away. I didn't want to lose them so I put them by a wooden stand marked Mimi - I figured she could take them if we had to leave quickly. Then I started going through a pile of papers. One of the things was a George Clinton calendar that Michael had sent me. I was ashamed that I hadn't opened it sooner. It was a big poster of George with a quote handwritten in black magic marker across from the calendar pages. Some of the letters in the quote were crossed out and written over. Then I realized that it was a 1989 calendar, and that Michael had sent it to me as a "collector's item."

Dream Relief

Freud predicted that one day there would be medical tests to graph how the brain works, and that these tests would prove his interpretation of dreams was based on scientific fact. Instead, brain scans used in sleep research indicate that Freud was wrong - our frontal lobes (where we repress/disguise/ censor) don't light up when we dream.

Martine feels it's a low blow

to RUB IT IN when a guy gets a bad scan back +++ techno redemo usually brings out the big bristles on her brain wave but HEY the BIG CIGAR did ask for this one right in the kisser and it's not like any one why/guy wins the turf war for dream lore with all the mysci DREAMS ARE raving round glossy cell schmootoos CALL IT buyers market or magicharpit BUT don't call dreams slate for spinners.

Grandmother's Tram House Dream

We were going to a poetry reading in a sort of 21st century tram that also was my grandmother's house. P. had his work in a blue cardboard binder marked

V
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L

off center, but I hadn't brought any poetry with me and I was getting nervous. As we went around a bend, my poem appeared in the aisle. Two rounded hills of grooved pavement were topped by words and parts of words highlighted in yellow marker. There was a definite zigzag pattern to the highlighting which I counted out as 7 15 8 15 8 15 7 before reading the poem aloud. I felt prepared, and we went to the reading in an old school gym. The other poets were sitting on the bottom rung of the bleachers with the school's coaches. P. walked up, his hair a stark white Afro parted in the middle and wide on the sides. I was thinking how much he looked like Dr. Zorba, only with a tan, when one of the poets swooned into the arms of two coaches and started screaming about P. hair. That didn't bother P., who read, then walked off, pleased with his work.

Charles North in Maine

I arrived in Maine by myself and was uncertain about what I was doing there. I rented a car at the airport and drove to a place out in the country. It was a standard motel in the front, but as I walked down the hall on the second floor the rooms became more elaborate. I was to stay in the last room on the left, which actually was a bi-level suite that opened onto the woods. There were two women checking out and they weren't in a very good mood. One said that she'd never stayed in a motel before where you were asked to find a buyer for the room before you left. I looked around and said that I thought the pink stucco exterior had worn well, and that it had a real European feel to it. Still, I didn't want to go into the room. Instead, I waited out in the hall, which became a big open anteroom for which there was no rear wall. I looked through the window of another room at a bunch of puppies playing in a big box. There was some discussion of how many exotic pets there were at this motel including a gigantic tarantula. Then the tarantula was right there, feeding at a dog dish. Charles North came out of the room for sale to assure everyone that the tarantula was trained, but I was terrified none the less. Since I'd never met Charles North before, I asked one of the other women what he was doing there, and was told that he was coaching football at a local school, an unlikely job for him, but he only had to sign-up for the fields and arrange for the cheerleaders to be there, and he could write poetry the rest of the time. Then I was driving Charles and the two women in the rental car to an unknown destination. I was relieved to get behind the wheel of a car.

Dream Screen

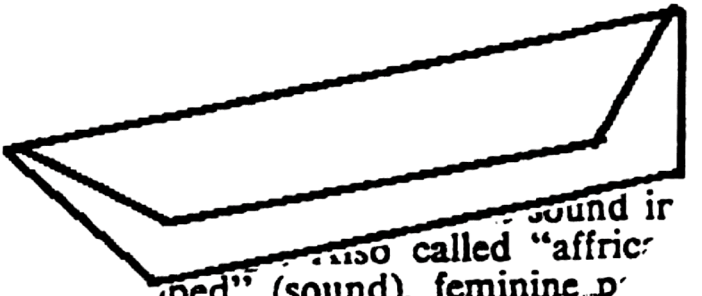
We've all had dreams with the power to escalate us through horrible days. We do these dreams a disservice by declining them as fares to the unconscious. Instead, see dreams as arrangements of information with no justification for the juxtapositions, each dream its own skewed locality, uncoupling "collective" from "unconscious." Dreams as antidotes to subjects constructing themselves in terms of illness. Dreams as a challenge to our society that structures itself as a series of individual "cures."

Martine is struck by this tidal wave of public welfare

so finds the verb "escalate" even more troubling, as in shopping mall hit stall STAND TALL snarewithall SOMETHING to bump the Author up when she can't move herself but if dreams go up, they come down - it's the straight line you want to malign, adding & adding to the BIG SCREEN between the GRID GUY with the PRIZE EYES doing the ITEMIZE of the pieces of fate on the other side. Just because the Author doesn't want to use her dreams doesn't mean she knows how to leave them alone. Punch out the dream screen/crunch up some grids/do the hokey-pokey and watch the dreams come in.

Pumpkin Letters

I went to a card shop, but it was one of those places where they have pretty blank cards for which you make up a greeting at a arcade-like machine. I'd gotten enough letters for three cards, and had made one already when my mother interrupted to ask if I'd gotten the letters made out of pumpkin because, if so, those were too mushy to mail well. I opened the one card I'd made and, sure enough, the letters fell out in a whoosh.



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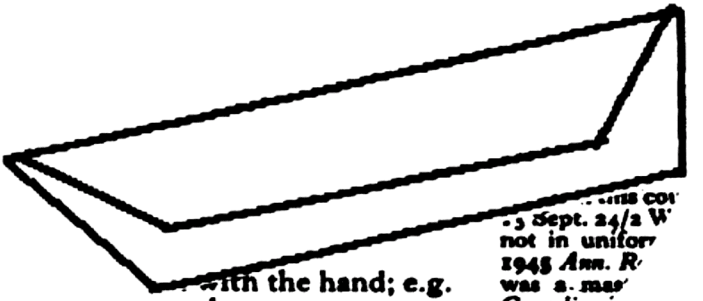

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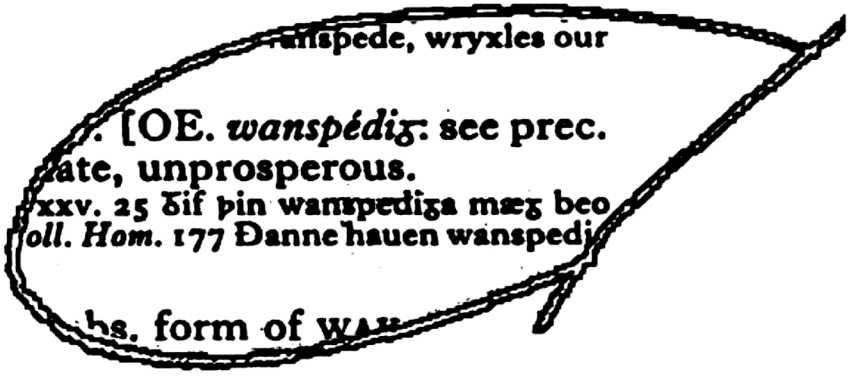
Hannah Weiner and the Penguin Hand Dream

Hannah was going to a poetry reading in a red leather snowsuit. It had not been snowing, but wherever she walked a white cloud went with her and kept cars away. I had seen her in a red leather jacket once, and asked her how she turned that into a snowsuit with a hood, face mask, and boots. At first she didn't want to tell me, but then she remembered walking out into a traffic jam with only me and an umbrella. "Have you ever seen a penguin hand?" she asked me. I knew then that whenever she wore her snowsuit she was a penguin, and that I didn't have to worry about her in the cold.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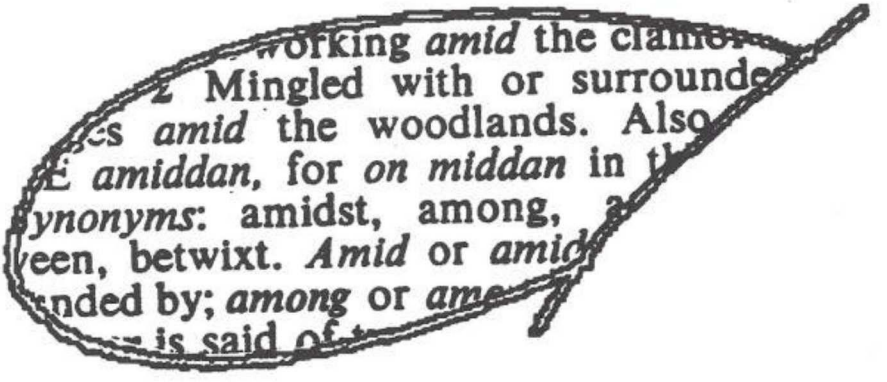
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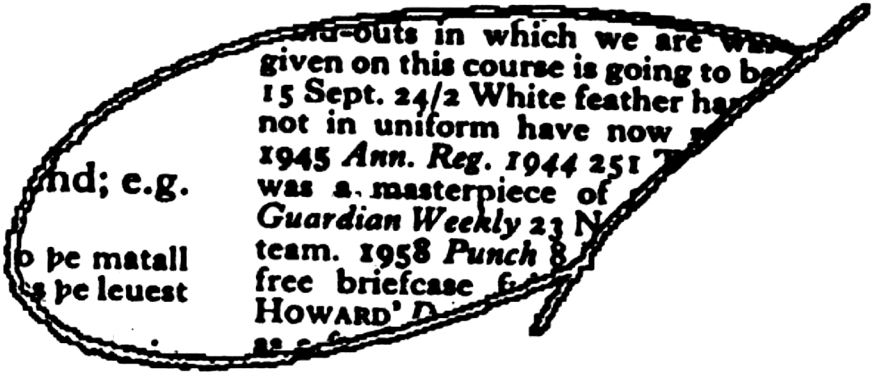
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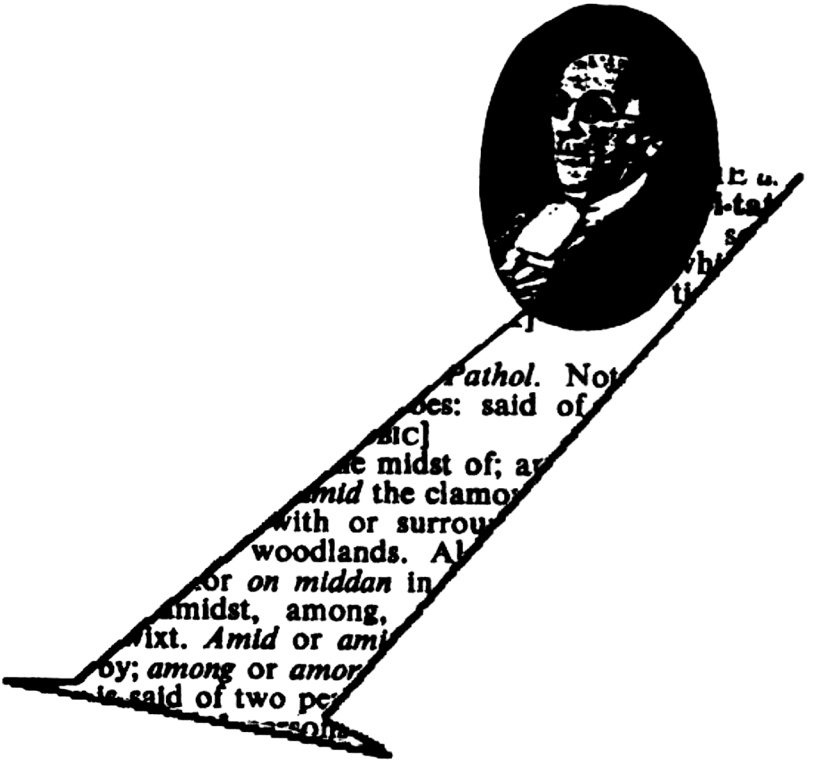
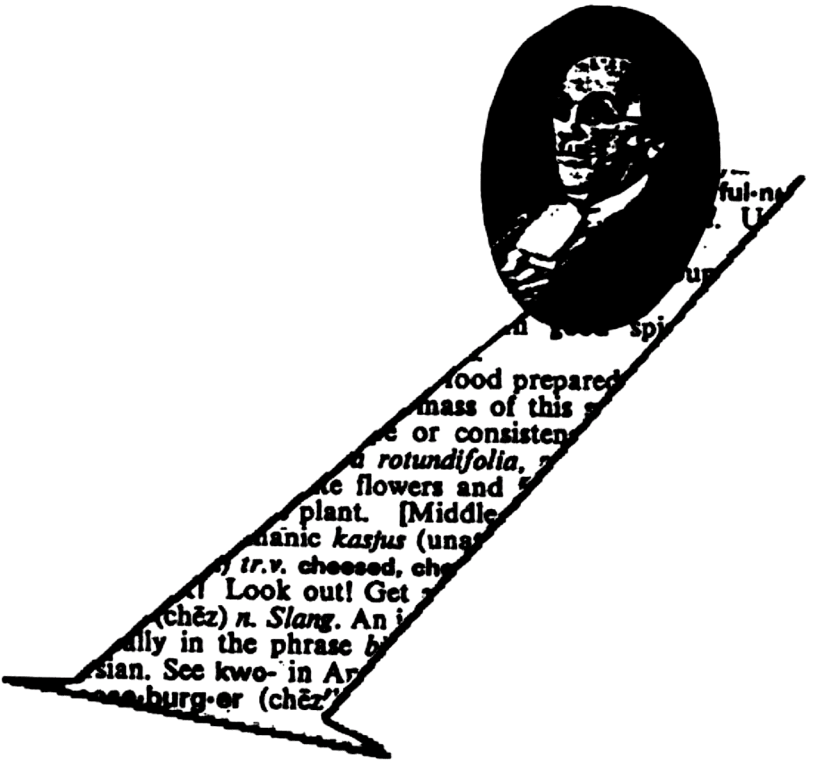
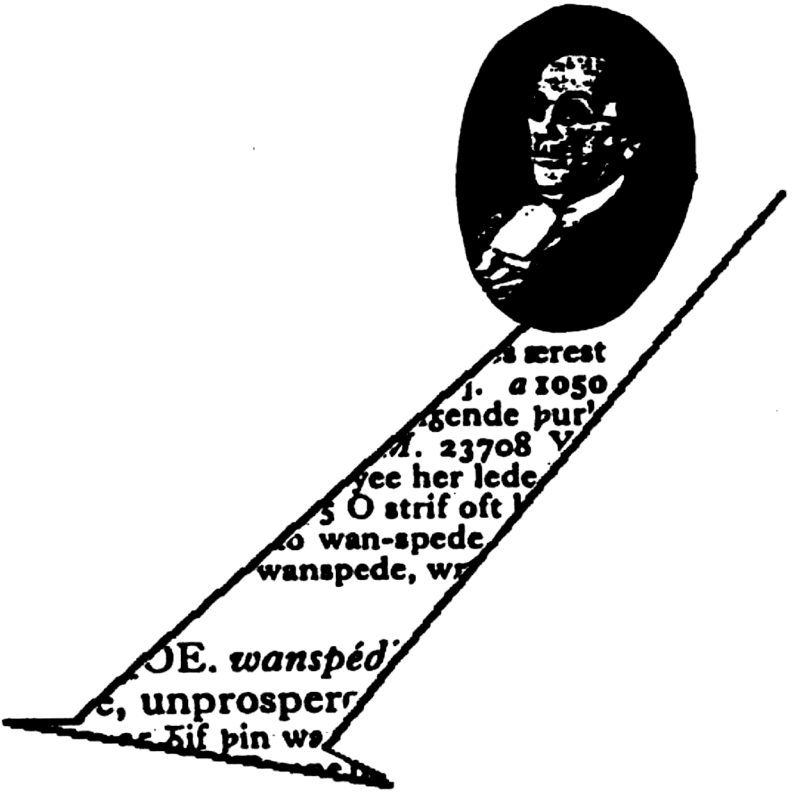
Rod Smith's Dream House

Rod had gotten a really big house that needed a lot of work done to it, and I was asked to write something about the room to be used for poetry readings. It seemed that there was something wrong with this room, but if I wrote a poem about it then it might be salvaged. I went to see the room - it had one long wall that was in the middle of being soundproofed with plastic rectangles that had colorful rags attached to them. I thought "Oh, this is really some art installation and they're not telling me to see if I get it." But then I realized that the room sloped off on both sides, and that the floor became deeper the more you moved away from the long wall - sort of an orchestra pit - and that the room was actually a big mold that had been stuck there and was not flush with the rest of the house - there were big gaps between this room and the other walls, but the floor was anchored to the foundation. I was sure Rod didn't know this, and that I had to let him know. Then I realized that this is what I was supposed to figure out - could the molded room be soundproofed and used for poetry readings without the rest of the house caving in. I went to find other people in the house, but when I did they assumed that I had already figured this out and were waiting for a poetry reading at 4:00 PM. I had nothing with me to read. P. told me to just read something else I'd written, but I wanted to find a yellow legal tablet I could write on by 4:00. Then I was at the bottom of a water slide, and P. said "Look - Ben Franklin is part of the water slide wall up on the left - and remember, he's known for being cheap." I looked up to see a profile of Ben sticking out from the slide, like a Mt. Rushmore president. I found a yellow tablet and started writing something for the people who were in a room upstairs sitting behind a long table.



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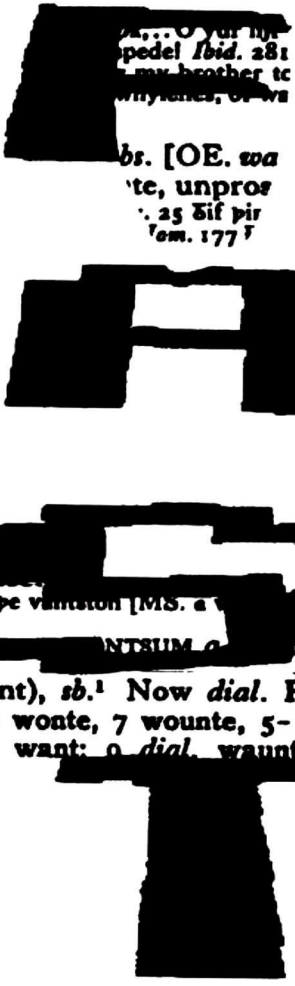
Bill Clinton Plane Ride Dream

I go to work but the office building turns out to be a hotel with lots of Russian guests. I watch as a clerk wheels a room service cart filled with file folders to the room of one of the Russians. I'm wondering if the guest will tip for the service. It looks like the answer is "no" from the clerk's expression as he leaves the room, but then the Russian bounds out after him and paper clips an English five pound note to his shirt. The clerk starts to run down an aisle, which is more like a trough of green silk studded with whole grain cereal. Then everyone is in a big room with lots of computers, and a guy standing next to a main frame tells me that any minute now I have to be the pilot for an airplane waiting on the roof. I panic and tell him that I can't fly, but he makes one of those "brush off" gestures with his hand and tells me it's easy - being a pilot no longer takes special training because today's planes are THAT SIMPLE to fly. I know this can't be true and start telling others in the room about my fears, but each in turn looks at me with a "WHAT's YOUR PROBLEM" expression, like I'm telling them I need help operating a water fountain. Then, to make matters worse, President Clinton walks in and starts shaking hands all around. I know without having to be told that he is to be the passenger in my plane. I can't believe that the President of the United States has been entrusted to me, and I start to wonder if this is some sort of assassination attempt - what an easy way to do it - have someone totally ignorant about flying take control of the cockpit - so I try to approach Clinton to tell him what's up, but there is a huge line in front of me and I can't get through. Then someone brings me a pilot's manual and there is general agreement in the room, including a nod from Clinton, that this is all I need to fly the plane. I sit down at the nearest desk to

look at the manual, and the combination FAX/photocopy machine next to me prints out the word FAST in huge letters straight up the middle of the page. As the paper goes over one of the toner rollers, each of the letters in FAST develops a bump but keeps on going. I take this to be a sign that I can fly the plane without any disasters happening, and share this conviction with Clinton who is now sitting across the desk from me. When he sees how excited I am about the bumpy letters, he sits up very straight and his eyes glaze over, finally realizing the gravity of the situation.



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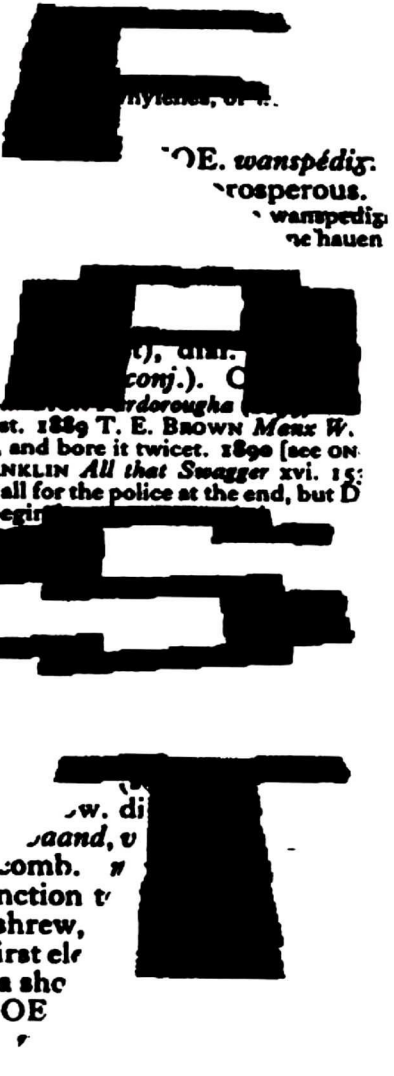
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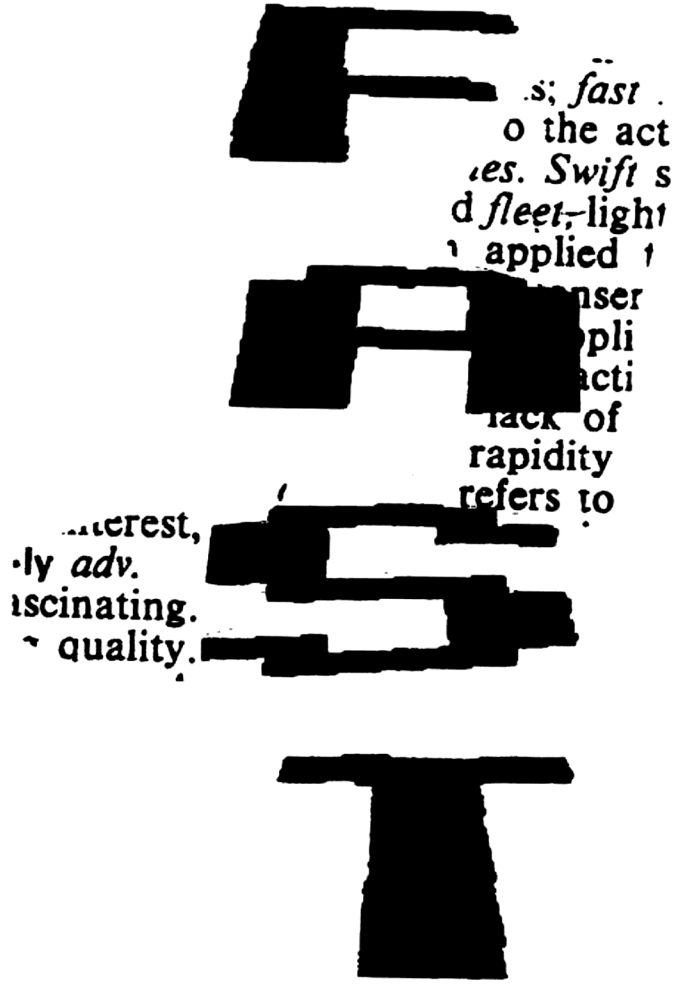
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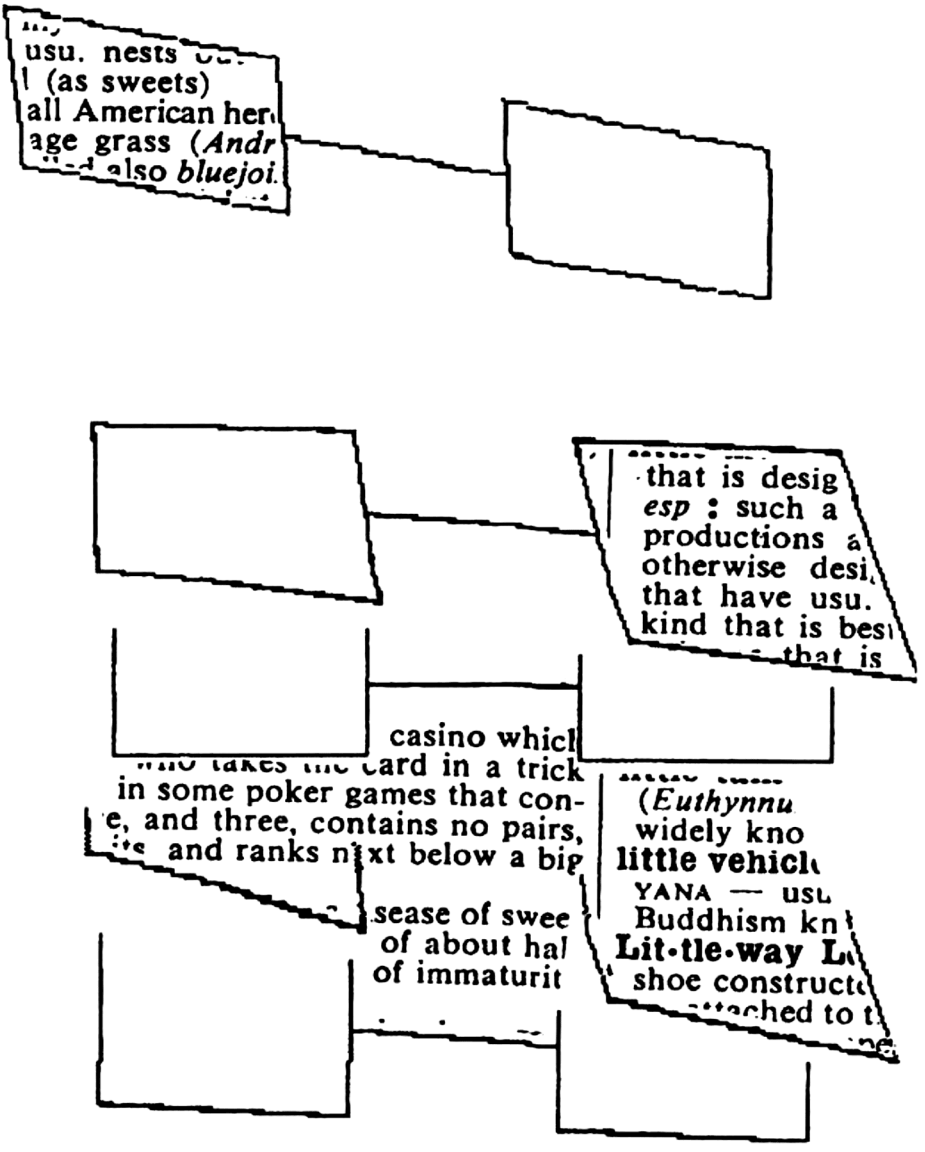
Mashed Lit Crit Dream

for Jena Osman

I was in an auditorium waiting for the program to begin. There was a big aisle down the center and clumps of seats on either side. I was expecting the usual work-related program, but then a group of women dressed in Eastern European garb walked down the aisle singing folk songs in tandem - first one group would sing something, then the others would respond. I got up to go home, but I was having a hard time getting all my things together - my purse, my water bottle, my lunch bag - when our neighbor Doretha said she'd help. Everyone else was gone except us and a woman in a babuska walking a little girl in a stroller. She left the stroller at the door and went out into the street, cupping her hands in puddles and drinking the water. The little girl got out of the stroller and started to do the same. Then the woman began wandering around in the middle of traffic, talking to herself and gesturing with her hands. I said I would walk up to the little girl's house and tell her parents about this. We reached their porch as the woman brought the little girl back. The father was David Ogden Stiers from M*A*S*H. I told him that I had something to tell him, but I couldn't do so in front of his child and her babysitter. He didn't seem to care. I was very "official" in the way I was talking, but he said "Well, can my wife call you tonight - she's the one who deals with all this and she's not home yet." I was worried that we'd have to leave the phone plugged in, and that his wife would call after we were in bed, but the matter was serious so I agreed. He went to a table where he was working to get a pencil and paper. The paper already had my name on it and part of the cover from "Pi in the Skye." I said "I'm Tina Darragh - are you reading my work?" He said no, that he was reading criticism of it by a

woman I'd never heard of. He showed me a hierarchically-structured chart - like a family tree - where the critic had taken various diagrams from my work and from the works of others to show how they didn't go together. Actually, she was saying that we didn't prove our point, that the data was bad. I looked at it and said "Well, this is ridiculous - that's not what's going on at all. We didn't survey people - we were taking things from the dictionary."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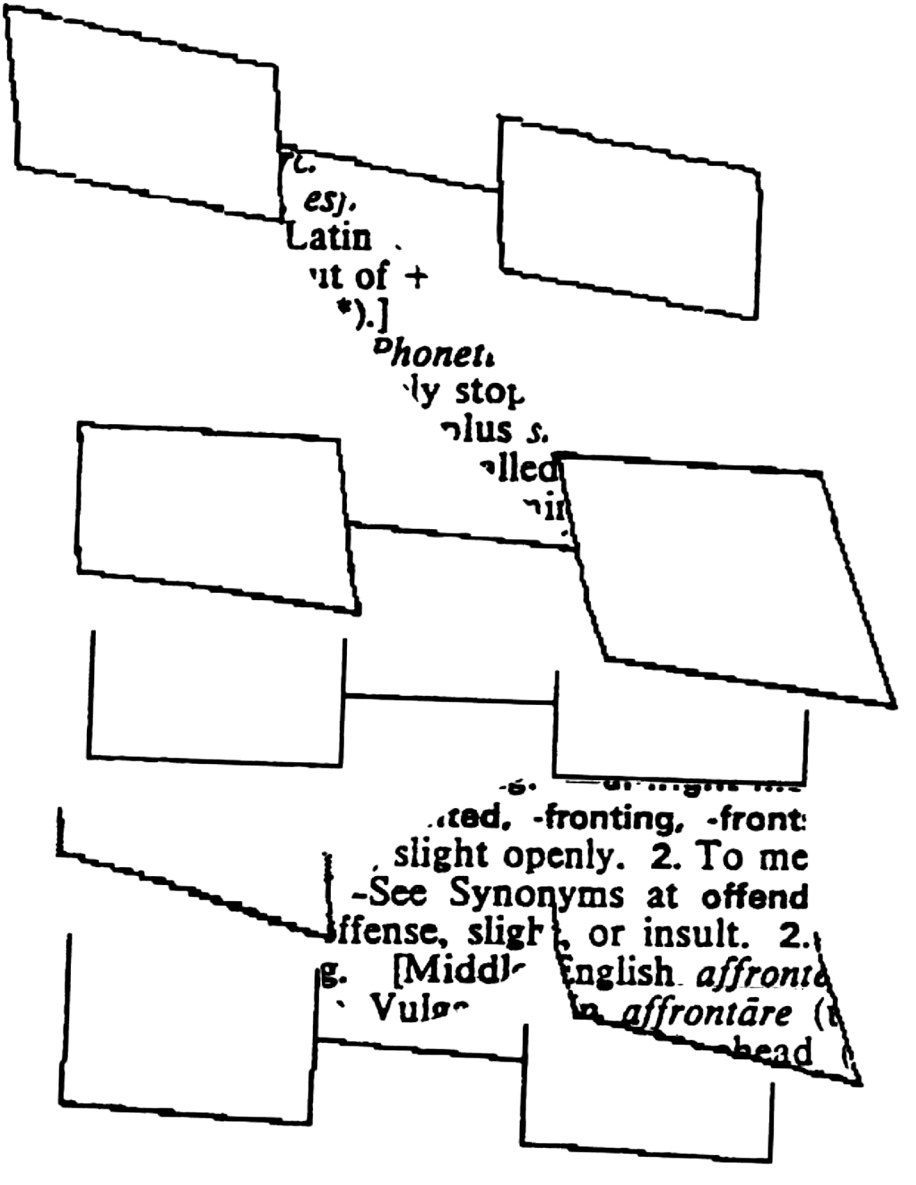
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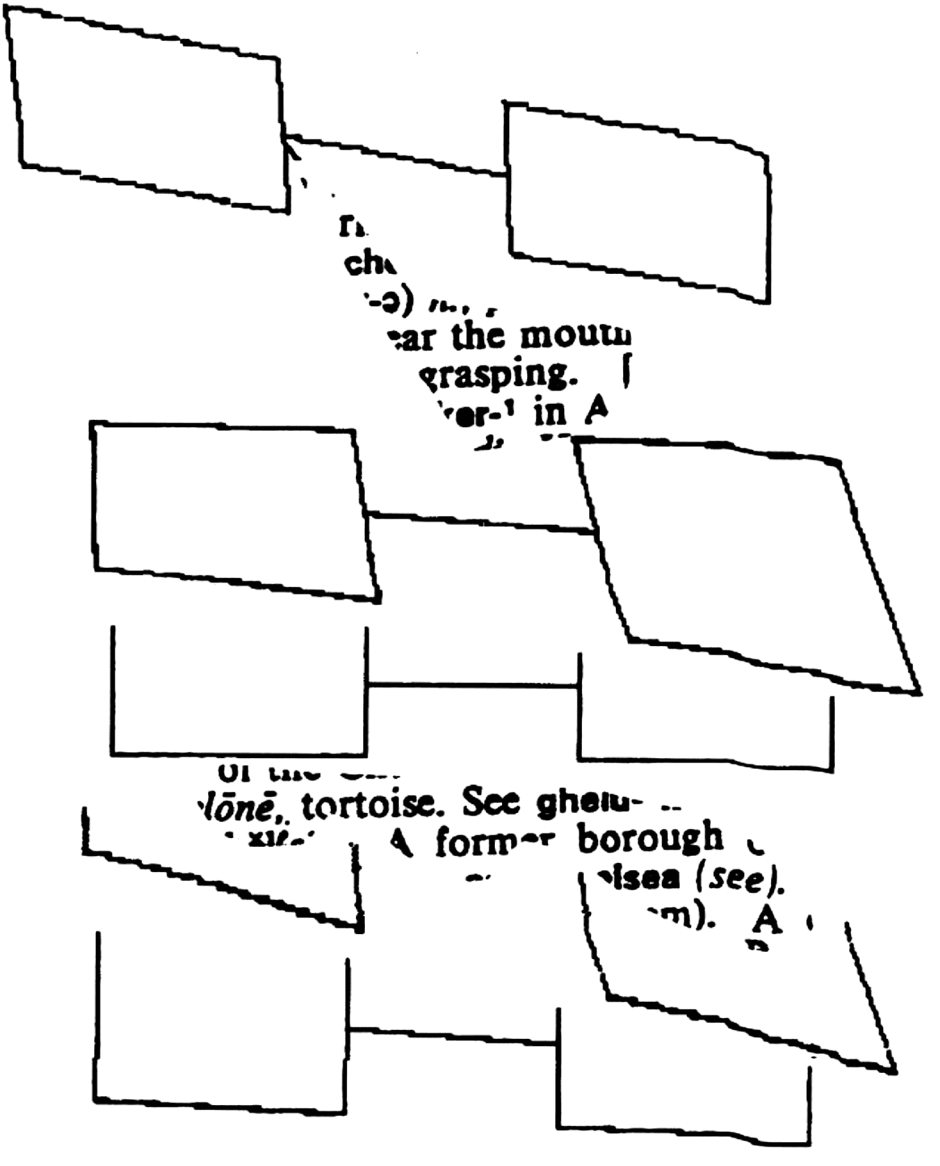


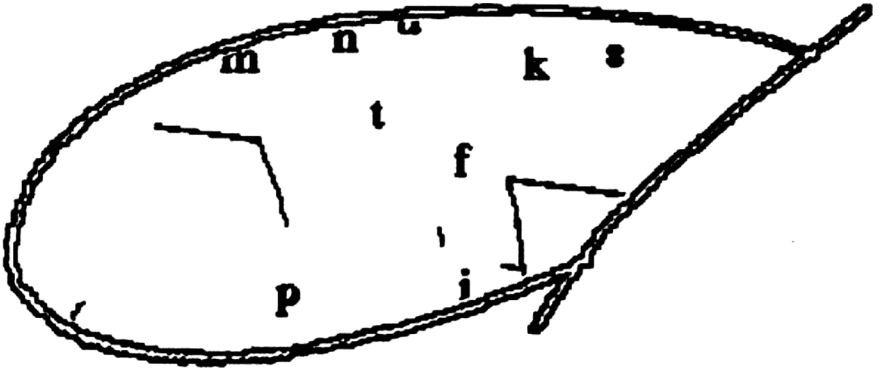
Club Dream Stream

Martine INSISTS on taking it from the top

to do a little SIGHzema'graphEEK at the Author's attempt to deep-six dream means by gutting top pics for the words beneath. Just because that's NO STORY doesn't mean that's NO SURVEY (dig dig) chop a little (dig dig) find your medal (dig dig) make it stick (dig dig) think you're quick (dig dig) oversight (dig dig) grave site (NO WORDS) under there ((NO WORDS)) what you'll bear (((NO WORDS))) pull you down ((((NO WORDS)))) to the ground ((((((NO WORDS)))))) as you slick (((((((NO WORDS))))))) into thick (((((((((NO WORDS)))))))))

so

wave your hands in the air like you're the flare
put your hands on your lips and let your fingers skip
then re-screen your dreams for the space in between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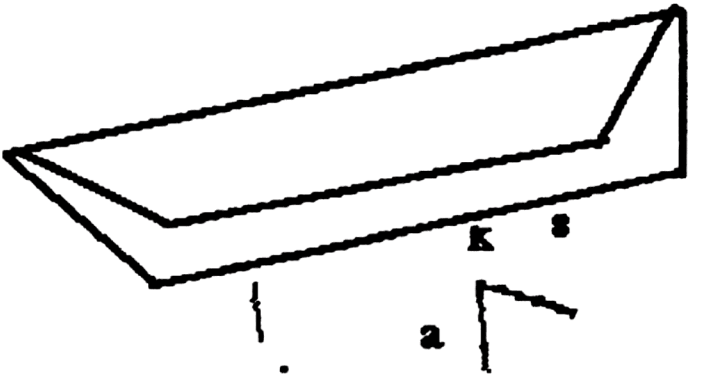
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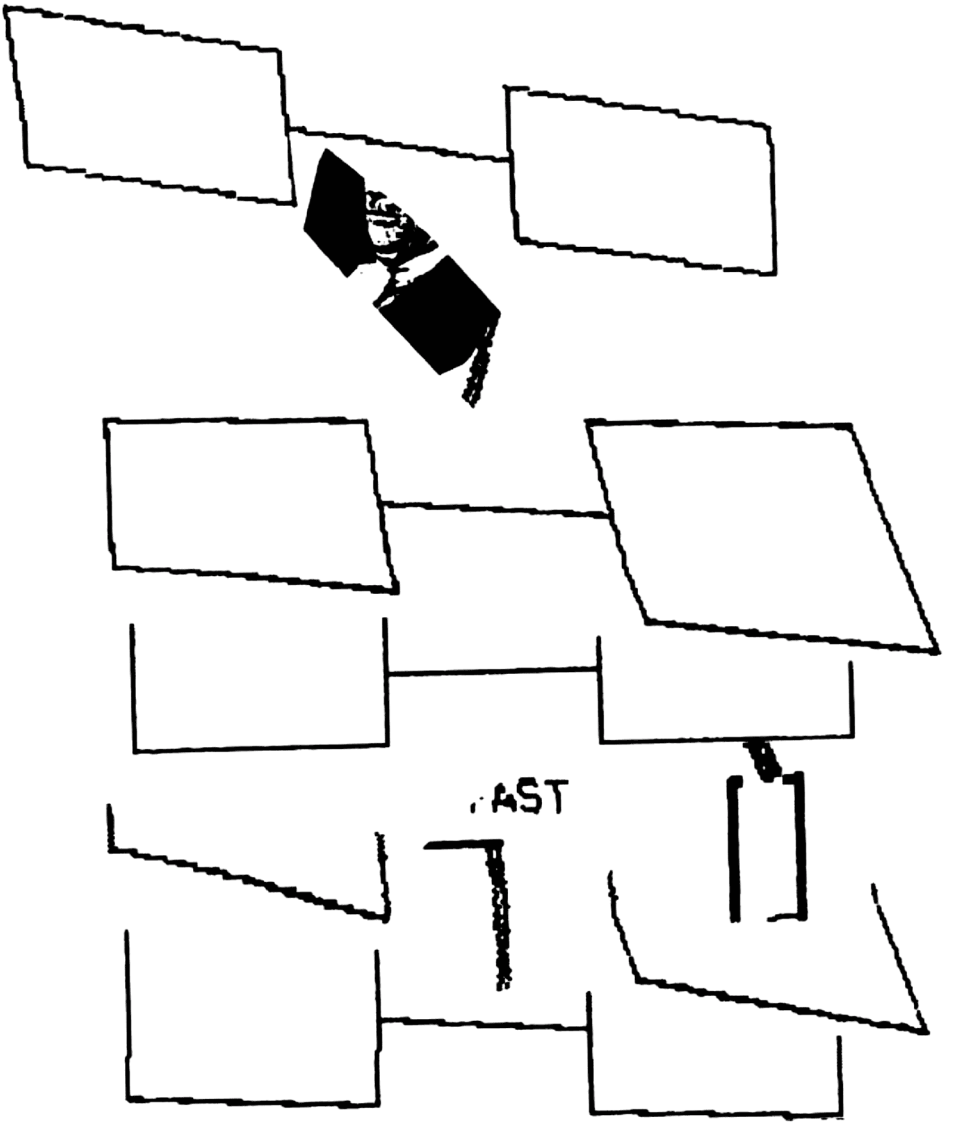
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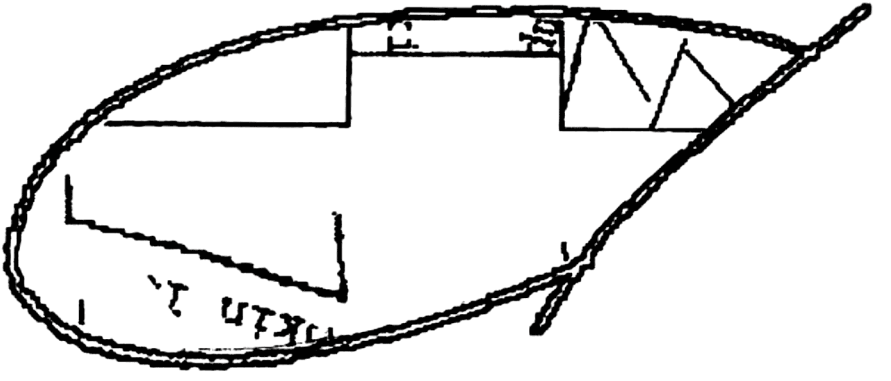

Dream Vaccine

Martine feels a new wardrobe coming on

now that her limited partnership with dream diving is
dissolved and she's no longer on call as the Author's
*un*conscience

like the other morning when A saw someone lying on a grate
and thought "looks like Martine" who then screamed:

THAT'S a GRATE not a gate to your BANISHED WORDS
estate!

See my rims snag that show
and irritate its word flow
so the one seen won't resolve
into someone who hasn't evolved
but comes forward in time so we'll know
we're the many with nowhere to go

[MECH] and [*Chem*] converse

no word scan no machine scam

unconscious without a formula

Freud doesn't need a test
with no words under
the vest

Gotta see a See floats some

Annotated Bibliography

When the dream that kicks off this project first presented itself, I didn't recognize it as a question. For me, dreams, if good, are an excuse to get in touch with friends who appear in them; if bad, they are reminders that I'm lucky to be up and walking around. But I've never thought of myself as a dreamer, even back in the mid-'70s when Michael Lally suggested that I do an "Auntie Tina's Dream Book" after hearing me describe one of my cast-of-thousands poetry dreams. I'd never seen the newsstand versions of those '20s African-American lottery guides like *Aunt Sally's Policy Players Dream Book* in which numbers are linked to images so you can "play" your dream the next day. I liked the idea of playing a dream rather than analyzing it, but I had no idea how to "lay that out." Shifting to the mid-90s, Mary Margaret Sloan asked me to read and write about Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto" (in Haraway's *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, New York: Routledge, 1991) for her anthology *Moving Borders: Three Decades of Innovative Writing by Women* (Jersey City, NJ: Talisman Publishers, 1998). Haraway champions experiments that proceed from the point of pleasure rather than from pain, but I had no idea how to uncross my usual procedures. Then I wondered if Martine could be a wiseass dream scream like Dodie Bellamy's Mina Harker (in her *Letters of Mina Harker*, West Stockbridge, MA: Hard Press, 1998). For encouragement, P. Inman got me Hal Foster's *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), and Lyn Hejinian suggested Barbara Maria Stafford's *Body Criticism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991). Thanks to these two books, the repetitive typo of Martine as my "altar ego" broadened M's mission from one of just criticizing me

to one of railing against the subjugation of dreams as images. There were additional cross-references that presented themselves as part of my daily tasks as a librarian. I found Jennifer Ford's *Coleridge on Dreams: Romanticism, Dreams and the Medical Imagination* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) through a review of it in *The Lancet*, and was delighted by her discussion of Coleridge's dream notebooks as a challenge to stereotypic notions of Romanticism. When I questioned whether I was merely substituting "dreams as immune systems" for "dreams as machines," Michael Sappol suggested that I read Emily Martin's *Flexible Bodies: Tracking Immunity in American Culture from the Days of Polio to the Age of Aids* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994).

Finally, I want to thank the poets Rod Smith of Bridge Street Books and Mark Wallace of the Ruthless Grip for asking me to read aloud drafts of this project over the years, and Lee Riley-Hammer for sharing with me her manuscript *That Atmospheric Perspective of Memory*. Reading another work-in-progress helped me to rearrange the cross-references in mine.

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